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not liable to change, may theoretically be expected to wear out, but to be a very long time about it."

CYPRIPEDIUM SPECTABILE.—Last spring I found on East Mountain, Williamstown, two flowers of the *Cypridium spectabile* Swartz, growing from the same stalk, one of which was the regular color, nearly all purple, and the other was pure white.—J. S. KINGSLEY.

ZOOLOGY.

NOTE ON STERNA LONGIPENNIS NORDMANN.—In the NATURALIST for July, 1874 (p. 433), a tern, "new to the Atlantic coast of North America," was described by me under the name of *Sterna Portlandica*—in event it should prove distinct from *S. longipennis* Nordm., with which Dr. Coues identified Mr. Lawrence's *S. Pikei* (see Key, p. 320). At that time no specimen of Nordmann's species existed, so far as known, in the United States, so that a satisfactory comparison could not be made, while the new bird did not agree well with the description of *S. Pikei* in the ninth volume of the Pacific Railroad Reports (p. 863). In order to settle the question of the relationship of *S. Portlandica*, Dr. Otto Finsch, Curator of the Bremen Museum in Germany, kindly forwarded to the Smithsonian Institution the only specimen of *S. longipennis*, a fine example, in perfect plumage, procured at the sea of Baikal, Siberia, June 3, 1870. Having thus an opportunity of actual comparison of specimens, the results are herewith given:

Sterna longipennis Nordmann is very closely related to *S. hirundo*, from which it scarcely differs more than as a geographical race, and is very distinct from both *S. Pikei* and *S. Portlandica*. The degree of relationship between the four forms is shown below:

A.—Beneath ashy white; nape pale pearl-gray; forehead black in summer; feet red. Tarsus .70 or more; culmen 1.40 or more.

Bill red, the terminal third black. Wing, 10.35; tail, 6.50; depth of fork, 3.10; culmen, 1.50; depth of bill, .30; tarsus, .80; middle toe, .68.

S. HIRUNDO.

Bill black, the upper mandible beneath the nostril and the basal two-thirds of the lower inclining to reddish. Wing, 10.35; tail, 6.30; depth of fork, 2.55; culmen, 1.50; depth of bill .30; tarsus, .75; middle toe, .68.

S. LONGIPENNIS.

B.—Beneath snowy-white; nape pure white; forehead wholly white in summer; feet black or red; tarsus .60 or less; culmen, 1.25 or less.

Bill deep black; feet deep black. Wing, 9.60; tail, 6.00; depth of fork, 2.60; culmen, 1.15; depth of bill, .25; tarsus, .55; middle toe, .60.

S. PORTLANDICA.

Bill dusky reddish; feet reddish. Wing, 9.00; tail, 5.50; culmen, 1.12; tarsus, .50.

S. PIKEI.

S. longipennis agrees very closely with both *S. hirundo* and *S. macroura* in the main points of coloration, having the same decided grayish tinge to the lower parts and nape, and the forehead black. The specimen compared, however, differs from both these species in having the white terminal borders to the longer scapulars, tertials and inner primaries much less distinct; the outer surface of the primaries is more silvery, and the black of the nape appears to extend farther down, terminating at about 3.00 from the base of the culmen instead of at less than 2.50. Whether this last feature depends upon the "make" of the skin is uncertain.—ROBERT RIDGWAY.

GEOLOGY AND PALEONTOLOGY.

NEW FORMS OF ELASMOSAURIDÆ.—Professor H. G. Seeley has recently examined the structure of the reptiles found in the English formations referred by authors to the old genus *Plesiosaurus*. He finds that the modifications in the structure of the scapular arch are such as to require their reference to two families, the *Plesiosauridæ* and *Elasmosauridæ*. The former embraces only the genus *Plesiosaurus*; the latter includes *Elasmosaurus* and three new genera, namely, *Eretmosaurus*, *Colymbosaurus* and *Muraenosaurus*. The characters distinguishing these genera are principally discoverable in the scapular arch.—E. D. C.

AMERICAN TYPES IN THE CRETACEOUS OF NEW ZEALAND.—Mr. Hector, the paleontologist of New Zealand, has obtained and described the remains of numerous extinct reptiles which present various points of resemblance to those disclosed by explorations in Kansas, and described in Dr. Hayden's annual reports. Thus he finds a species of *Polycotylus* and a form which he states to be allied to *Elasmosaurus*, called *Tanivasaurus*. He adds a number